

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 13528

FROM VATICAN OFFICE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS/PGOV,VT,PL
SUBJECT: VATICAN AND POLAND -- A STATUS REPORT

REF: A. ROME 9226 B. ROME (1977) 19837

1. THIS MESSAGE UPDATES THE STATUS OF VATICAN/POLISH
CONTACTS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE HISTORIC MEETING BETWEEN
THE POPE AND FIRST SECRETARY GIEREK IN DECEMBER, 1977.

2. AT A DISTANCE OF SOME SIX MONTHS SINCE THEIR HISTORIC
MEETING AT THE VATICAN (ROME (1977) 19837), THERE APPEARS TO
BE SOME FORWARD MOVEMENT IN VATICAN/POLISH RELATIONS BUTNOT
AS MUCH AS VATICAN OBSERVERS, OR SEVEN SOME VATICAN OFFICIALS,
HAD EXPECTED. IN FACT, MOST OBSERVERS, INCLUDING HIGH VATICAN
OFFICIALS, HAD EXPECTED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOME TYPE OF
PERMANENT VATICAN REPRESENTATION AT WARSAW BY MID-1978. THE
MAIN REASON FOR LAG IN THIS ENDEAVOR IS ATTRIBUTED TO
CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI'S RESERVATIONS. REPORTEDLY HE CONTINUES
TO SUSPECT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FULL-TIME VATICAN DIPLOMATIC
REPRESENTATIVE IN WARSAW. HE FEELS THAT SUCH A REPRESENTATIVE
WOULD IPSO FACTO DETRACT FROM HIS PERSONAL AUTHORITY SINCE
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THE PAPAL REPRESENTATIVE WOULD PROVIDE AN ALTERNATIVE POLE
OF AUTHORITY TO THAT OF HIS OWN FOR BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND
THE CHURCH HIERARCHY. HE ALSO FEARS THAT THE VATICAN'S
REPRESENTATIVE MIGHT FOLLOW, FOR REASONS EXTRANEIOUS TO THE
POLISH SITUATION, A MORE LENIENT POLICY TOWARDS THE POLISH
REGIME ON CHURCH/STATE ISSUES.

3. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE RECENT VISIT (MAY23-JUNE 6) OF NUNCIO-AT-LARGE LUIGI POGGI TO POLAND (ROME 9226) ILLUSTRATES THE DELICATE NATURE OF THE SITUATION: POGGI ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE VATICAN SOURCE, SOUGHT IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH POLISH CLERICS AND GOP PFFICIALS TO PUT TO REST RUMORS THAT THERE EXISTED ANY DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE HOLY SEE AND THE POLISH EPISCOPATE ON A NEGOTIATING STRATEGY VIS-A-VIS THE GOP; --IN A SERMON AT THE CATHEDRAL OF SIEDICE POGGI ASSURED HIS LISTENERS THAT "THE ACTIONS OF THE HOLY SEE ARE ALWAYS CONCORDANT TO THOSE OF THE POLISH EPISCOPATE AND THOSE OF THE EPISCOPATE ARE ALWAYS CONCEORDANT TO THE ACTIONS OF THE HOLY SEE."

4. ACCORDING TO VATICAN SOURCES POGGI MET SEVERAL TIMES WITH CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI AND WOJTYLA AND HAD FOUR MEETINGS WITH MINISTER KAZIMIERZ KAKOL, HEAD OF THE OFFICE FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND A MEETING WITH ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER JOSEPH CZYREK. VATICAN RADIO REPORTED ON JUNE 2 THAT IN THE COURSE OF THE VARIOUS MEETINGS POGGI DISCUSSED THE "CHURCH'S JURIDICAL PERSONALITY" AS WELL AS OTHER QUESTIONS RELATING TO "RELIGIOUS LIBERTY." IN HIS DEPARTURE COMMENTS TO JOURNALISTS ON JUNE 6, POGGI ALSO PUBLICLY DOWNPLAYED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE VATICAN AND THE ESPISCOPATE BY DENYING RUMORS OF "IMMINENT" PLANS FOR THE VATICAN GROUP FOR "PERMANENT CONTACTS" WITHTHE GOP TO OPEN AN OFFICE IN CONFIDENTIAL

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WARSAW. HE ALSO STATED--FOR THE FIRST TIME IN PUBLIC-- THAT A CENTRAL ISSUE IN VATICAN/GOPNEGOTIATIONS IS THE REFUSAL OF THE GOP TO RECOGNIZE THE "JURIDICAL STATUS" OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN POLAND.

5. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT THE GOP IS ALSO ATTEMPTING TO PUT THE STATUS OF THE VATICAN/POLISH NEGOTIATIONS ON A LOWER KEY AND TO STRESS THE GOP'S APPRECIATION OF CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI'S UNIQUE ROLE IN POLAND. KAZIMIERZ KAKOL THE DIRECTOR--WITH THE RANK OF MINISTER--OF THE OFFICE FOR RELIGIONS" IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE ITALIAN CORRESPONDENT OF IL GIORNALE (RELEASED JUNE 7,1978) STATED THAT --FOR THE TIMEBEING THE FORMULA OF "WORKING CONTACTS" WITH THE PRESENCE OF COMMISSIONS IN ROME AND WARSAW, "APPEARS SUFFICIENT;" --IN POLAND THE CHURCH OCCUPIES A POSITION OF THE "FIRST ORDER", THAT IT IS AN AUTHENTIC SOCIAL FORCE AND THAT THE MORAL AND ETHICAL TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH AS ACCEPTED BY THE STATE; --CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI "IS AN EMINENT POLISH PATRIOT" AND THAT "ALL HIS ACTIONS ARE INSPIRED BY WHAT IS GOOD FOR

THE POLISH NATION."

6. COMMENT: AS REPORTED PREVIOUSLY (REFTELS), OUR BEST ESTIMATE NOW IS THAT ARCHBISHOP POGGI WILL RETURN TO WARSAW ON A PERMANENT BASIS IN OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER, 1978, FOLLOWING THE VISIT OF CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI WITH POPE PAUL WHICH IS PROJECTED FOR LATE SEPTEMBER. THE VATICAN-PREFERRED FORMULA FOR VATICAN REPRESENTATION AT WARSAW IS FOR ARCHBISHOP POGGI TO BE NAMED APOSTOLIC DELEGATE TO THE POLISH CATHOLIC CHURCH AND ALSO THE VATICAN'S SPECIAL ENVOY TO THE GOP. IN THE EVENT THE CARDINAL CONTINUES TO INTERPOSE OBJECTIONS, THE VATICAN'S FALL-BACK POSITION IS TO HAVE POGGI INITIALLY INSTALLED IN WARSAW AS THE HEAD OF THE VATICAN COMMISSION FOR PERMANENT WORKING CONTACTS WITH GOP. GARDNER
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